Stacey B. Dwyer, P.E.
Associate Director
NPDES Permits and TMDLs Branch
United States Environmental Protection Agency
Region 6
1445 Ross Avenue
Dallas, TX 75202-2733

Re: Interim Objection to Preliminary Draft Permit and Request for Additional Information
Georgia Pacific Crossett LLC – Crossett Paper Operations
NPDES Permit No. AR0001210 AFIN 02-00013

Dear Ms. Dwyer:

Thank you for the opportunity to respond to your letter of May 19, 2017 in regard to the referenced facility. I have attempted to provide additional information and clarification about the facility's treatment plant and its effluent discharge locations. For clarity, I have reprinted your questions in italicized bold type with our response below each question.

- ***The proposed permit does not appear to follow the CWA requirements in the manner in which it describes why technology based limits apply above Mossy Lake and water quality based limits apply below Mossy Lake. Pursuant to CWA 303(b)(1)(c);40 CFR 122.44(d), the facility is required to meet technology based limits as well as other applicable limits needed to meet water quality standards prior to discharge to the receiving stream. Based on Mossy Lake being the receiving stream, both technology based limits and water quality based limits should apply prior to discharge into that water body, and there should be no treatment technology below the discharge to Mossy Lake.***

Response: Coffee Creek above Mossy Lake and Mossy Lake are classified for agricultural and industrial uses only. Primary contact recreation and fishery uses are not attainable pursuant to 40 CFR 131.10 (g) [See attached April 26, 1988 letter from Myron Knudson, Director Water Management Division (6W) to Paul Means, Director of the Arkansas Department of Pollution Control and Ecology]. ADEQ has assigned technology based effluent limits (TBEL's) to the discharge from the aeration basin (Aeration Basin Outfall) because TBEL's are protective of current designated uses assigned to Mossy Lake and Coffee Creek upstream of Mossy Lake. Since Mossy Lake is the final step in the treatment system, water quality based effluent limits (WQBEL's) are applicable at the discharge to Coffee Creek from Mossy Lake (Mossy Lake Outfall).

In addition, the permit requires monitoring at the discharge from the Aeration Basin Outfall because when the Ouachita River at Felsenthal L&D is 62 ft msl the effluent weir at the Mossy Lake Outfall is flooded and samples are not attainable at the Mossy Lake Outfall. From 1984 to 2016, the Mossy Lake Outfall was inundated approximately 43% of the time. Therefore, the Aeration Basin Outfall is the logical monitoring point to insure that the TBEL's are met. For these reasons, TBEL's are appropriate for the Aeration Basin Outfall, and WQBEL's apply at the Mossy Lake Outfall.

- ***Application of water quality based limits below Mossy Lake could suggest that ADEQ does not consider Mossy Lake the receiving stream, but part of the facility's wastewater treatment system. The current proposed Permit does not appear to support this approach nor does it indicate that Mossy Lake has received a waste treatment system exclusion under 40 CFR 122.2. If ADEQ believes Mossy Lake is an excluded waste treatment system, addition documentation should be added to show that the water body "was designed to meet the requirements of [the] CWA" as required by the regulations.***

Response: Pursuant to 40 CFR 122.2, waste treatment systems are excluded from waters of the United States by definition. GP's process flow diagram, submitted with the application, clearly shows that Mossy Lake is part of its waste treatment system. ADEQ does not have any information that Mossy Lake is not part of the facility's treatment system. Prior permits have applied WQBEL's at the Mossy Lake Outfall. ADEQ issued permits circa 1992, 2004, 2010 and modifications in 2011 and 2015 that treated Coffee Creek and Mossy Lake as part of the treatment system. EPA reviewed and concurred with these permits, suggesting that EPA did not consider Coffee Creek above Mossy Lake and Mossy Lake the receiving stream, but part of the facility's treatment system. ADEQ believes that the current proposed Permit does not change this approach.

- ***The proposed Permit does not clearly delineate where the facility's waste treatment system lies in relation to Coffee Creek upstream of Mossy Lake. GP has stated the mill's effluent channel which conveys the effluent throughout the system is completely separate from Coffee Creek. The proposed Permit should indicate the location of the effluent channels and the location of Coffee Creek, including any information evidencing GP's separation of the two, such as berms or structures installed to avoid communication between the effluent channels and Coffee Creek during flood events.***

Response: GP's effluent conveyance channel (conveyance channel) which conveys the effluent throughout the system is completely separate from Coffee Creek until it enters the upper reaches of Mossy Lake. Flows from the conveyance channel and Coffee Creek converge in the upper reaches of the final treatment unit, Mossy Lake. The conveyance channel extending from the Aeration Basin Outfall to the upper reaches of Mossy Lake is a man-made conveyance that is separated from Coffee Creek to its east by a berm (excavated soil from construction of the ditch) at least until the Ouachita River reaches the 65 ft msl stage at Felsenthal L&D and Mossy Lake floods. As the Ouachita River rises above the 65 ft msl stage at Felsenthal L&D, the berm separating the conveyance channel and Coffee Creek will become submerged, moving the separation point upstream with the rising water. According to GP, as the Ouachita River reaches near the 80 ft msl stage at Felsenthal L&D, the Ouachita River will extend almost

to the Aeration Basin Outfall, and the upper reaches of Mossy Lake will be under about 15 ft of water. Therefore, Coffee Creek and the conveyance channel communicate during flood events that reach a level significantly higher than the 65 ft msl stage at Felsenthal L&D, and it is not feasible to separate them at those higher river levels.

Sincerely,

Robert E. Blanz, PhD, P.E.
Acting Senior Operations Manager
Office of Water Quality

Cc: Caleb J. Osborne, Associate Director, ADEQ Office of Water Quality

Enclosure